

Prabuddha Bharata

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

VOL. XXIV]

MAY 1919

[No. 274

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

PART II.—VIII

[Place—*The Belur Math (under construction)*. Year—*Beginning of 1897*.

Subjects—*Strict rules for the observance of Brahmacharya.—Only men of Sattvic nature can appreciate the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna.—To be only absorbed in meditation is not the Dharma of this age—along with it is wanted the Karma-yoga of the Gita.*]

The present Math buildings are now constructed, the little that is unfinished is being completed under the supervision of Swami Vijnanananda. Swamiji is not in good health; therefore doctors have advised him to go out on boat in the mornings and evenings on the Ganges. Swami Nityananda has procured the house-boat of the Roy Babus of Narail for Swamiji's use. It is lying anchored in front of the Math. Swamiji sometimes according to inclination wanders on the Ganges on the house-boat.

To-day is Sunday. The disciple has come to the Math and after meals is sitting in Swamiji's room and conversing with him. Swamiji has now framed a few

rules for the guidance of the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Math; their object is to keep them aloof from indiscriminate mixing with worldly people; for example, separate places are arranged for them for meals; separate place for rest and retirement. The conversation turned on this topic.

Swamiji.— Now-a-days I feel a peculiar smell of worldliness in the dress and clothes of worldly people; therefore I have made it a rule in the Math that householders should not sit on the beds of Sadhus. Formerly I read so in the Shastras that such a smell is felt; therefore Sannyasins cannot bear the smell of *Grihastas*; now I see it is true. By strictly observing

these rules, the Brahmacharins will in time grow into genuine and sterling Sannyasins. When they are established in the ideals of Sannyasa, they can mix on an equal footing with worldly men without any harm. But now if they are not kept within the barrier of strict rules, they will all go wrong. In order to attain to strict Brahmacharya one has in the beginning to observe strict rules regarding chastity; to keep oneself aloof from the very mention of the name of the opposite sex, and even to give up the company of married people.

The disciple who is a householder was struck dumb with awe at these words of Swamiji and felt dejected that he would not be able to associate freely as before with the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Math and said, "Sir, I feel towards the Math and all its inmates as more nearly related than to my own wife and children. As if they are known to me from a long time. The unbounded freedom that I enjoy in the Math, I feel nowhere else in the world like it.

Swamiji.— All those who are pure in heart will feel like that here. Those who do not feel so—know them as not belonging to the Math and its ideals. That is the reason why many people coming here from mere sensation-mongering, then runaway. Devoid of continence, day and night running after money, such people can never appreciate the ideals of the Math, can never regard the Math people as their own. The Sannyasins of the Math are not like of old, ash-besmeared, with matted hair and iron tongs in their hands and curing disease by medicinal tit-bits; therefore, seeing the contrast, people cannot appreciate them. The ways, movements and ideas of our Master were all cast in a new mould, so we are also of a new pattern.

Sometimes dressed like gentlemen, we are engaged in lecturing on religion; at other times, throwing all aside, with "Hara, Hara, Byom, Byom" on the lips, ash-clad, we are immersed in deep austerities and meditation in forests and jungles.

Now it does not do to merely quote the authority of our ancient books and scriptures. The torrential current of Western civilisation is now flowing over the length and breadth of the country. Without studying its adaptation and usefulness a little, does it do now simply to sit in meditation on the tops of the mountains? Now is wanted—as said in the Gita by the Lord—intense Karma-yoga—with unbounded courage and indomitable power in the heart. Then will the people of the country be roused, otherwise they will continue in the darkness which has enveloped you and all alike.

The day is nearly ended. Swamiji came downstairs, dressed for going out on the boat on the Ganges and paced for sometime the lawn in front of the Math where the embankment has now been raised on the eastern side. Later, when the boat was brought to the *ghat*, he in company with Swami Nirvayananda, Nityananda and the disciple boarded the boat.

Boarding the boat Swamiji sat on the roof and the disciple sat at his feet. The small waves of the Ganges, beating upon the sides and bottom of the boat are making a purling sound, a soft breeze has risen, the western sky is not yet flushed with roseate hue of the evening sun—it is yet about half-an-hour for the sun to go down. The boat is floating northwards. There is joy on the face of Swamiji, a tender expression his eyes, his words bespeak deep dispassion for the world, and his every expression and movement is mani-

festing the great self-control and restraint of his being. That expressive form, it is difficult to make one understand unless one has seen it himself.

The boat passed the Dakshineswar temple and getting a favourable wind advanced still farther northwards. Getting sight of the Dakshineswar temple, the disciple and the two Sannyasins made salutation. But Swamiji sat indifferent to the outward world, lost in deep thought. The disciple and the other Sannyasins talked among themselves many things about the Dakshineswar temple; it looked as if these words did not at all enter the ears of Swamiji. Gradually the boat advanced towards Panihatty. Reaching Panihatty

it was anchored for some time at the *ghat* of the garden-house of Babu Govinda Kumar Chaudhury. It was proposed once before to rent this house for the use of the Math. Swamiji descended from the boat and went round the house and the garden and looked over the place minutely and said—"The garden is nice but is at a great distance from Calcutta. The devotees of Sri Ramakrishna would have been put to trouble to walk such a long distance from Calcutta. It is good that the Math has not been established here." The boat again turned towards the Math and after floating and passing through the evening darkness for nearly an hour reached the Math.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE one note that rings through all the writings and actions of the Swami is of strength. In giving that message he never faltered nor in emphasising it he wavered. The test by which he would judge any system of thought claiming the allegiance of man is also the extent to which it would add to his strength. That is the reason why the Advaita Vedanta claimed his homage because there was not a single note of weakness in it, because by its implications all extraneous and suppositious helps are discarded and the whole of human destiny is placed upon what one *is* and what one *will be*. True to the teachings of his Master—"With the Advaita in your hands you can travel and accept the whole field of religious thought"—dualism and all other systems were interpreted in the Swami's exposition in their strength-giving aspects.

In the flawless sincerity of his nature, his nice discrimination of what constitutes strength is worth noticing. In religious life while appreciating the value of the worship of a personal God with its oceans of emotional content, he was aware of its colourless effect on natures that are inertly sentimental, and which is not at all dynamic in their lives. In order to galvanise such natures with volitional efforts he preached the Advaita aspect of the Vedanta. There are some states of human mind when the high forms of religious practice are ineffective in transforming human character; it is then to be subjected to more drastic remedies. One of Sri Ramakrishna's sayings runs thus: When a peculiar poisonous sore has affected the body, ordinary medicines do not work; it has to be subjected to heat-fomentations of burning charcoal. So when the mind is running in the old ruts

of inertness and refuses to be moved out of it, mere repeating the name of the Lord does not do; more powerful forms of *bhakti* have to be practised.

Therefore the Swami stressed the sterner aspect of the Vedanta in respect to Indian humanity in the present stage. In this he was true to the teachings of his Master who valued character above mere emotion. When the Master was asked by some one to bless him with the capacity of religious emotion, he is reported to have said, "Do you think that mere religious sentiment is the climax of religious attainment; one-pointed and steadfast devotion to religious ideals, renunciation, strength of mind, in a word, character is a far greater acquisition." It is the volitional aspect of human character that the Swami wished to bring out more than the emotional, but religious emotion truly aroused concentrates the will powerfully. Anyway, it is the death-like grip of religious ideals and transformation of the will in consonance with them, so that the individual will be able to stand up for them against all the world, and to face death for them if need be—is, in the ultimate, the test of religious character. Mere sentimentality and emotionalism he abhorred—it is in his words, "overflow of the senses," and its value on natures which are morbidly sentimental, without the powerful will behind to carry out the cherished ideals into performance of noble acts of service and helpfulness is almost nil.

It is the will-manifestation in everything that we should seek as expression of the religious impulse. But the will must be purified and in harmony with Truth and God. Therefore the Swami stressed Work as a builder of religious

character. In steadfast work, the energetic exercise of a purified will through a long series of acts, exercised steadfastly in spite of all the obstacles and difficulties that may obtain around, we have a noble manifestation and expression of human faculty. Steadfastness, "the clinging on to a thing like grim death" he extolled as a noble achievement of human character.

Our lives should be made of sterner stuff. There is too much of shrinking from mortification, too much of the coddling of the body, and yielding to the dictates of the senses. We have to bring out the divinity which "will enable us to bear heat and cold, hunger and thirst," which will endow our minds with a powerful will able to overcome mountain-high obstacles, make the bodies of granite able to withstand a thousand shocks of life. The luxurious ideals which are insidiously creeping into our homes and lives, the ideals of 'enjoying the world'—nay more enjoying the taste of the Divine in sight, sound, touch, taste etc. which are finding such powerful advocates among our poets and thinkers, are sure to lead to enfeeblement of the will and make the whole people effeminate. The will is strengthened not by yielding to the body and the senses, but by establishing mastery over them and freedom from their tyrannous dictates. Sense-bound creatures that men are if they accept apologies for sense-vanities then there is no hope for them. The old type of the orthodox Hindu Brahman with his life built of austerity and renunciation of sense-vanities is a nobler national ideal than the glorification of the senses which is finding such great advocates amongst us to-day. As a warning against the idealisation of the sense-life, and effeminate luxuries eating into our vitals and

making us hypocrites, the note of strengthening the will by resisting the tyrannical dictates of the senses and the ever-increasing bodily requirements needs to be sounded. Man needs to have a heroic and courageous outlook on life—in the words of the Swami Vivekananda—"What we want now is muscles of iron and nerves of steel,

gigantic wills which nothing can resist which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion—even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face"—and not maudlin sentimentality nor animal yielding to sense-requirements.

TWO SIDES TO TRUTH.

THE message, delivered with unexampled eloquence in India, America and Great Britain, by Swami Vivekananda contained and conveyed a plea for calmness and tranquility. "Throw aside," he exclaimed, "the fuss and flurry of worldly things. Be true to the God within you. Be always calm. Do not permit yourself to be fretted by failure or excited by success. Do not allow the turmoil and the strife that surround you to tear you for a single moment from the remembrance that you, yourself, are not affected by them. You are one with the Changeless One. No fire can consume you; no frost can congeal your soul. Be always calm."

Adapting illustrations from both Eastern and Western sources, he unceasingly preached the gospel of inward tranquility. Amidst all "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," he bade his hearers remain calm; assured of that immutability which is the heritage of the sons of God. Many years prior to Swamiji's advent in England, Tennyson had written, "There is no joy but calm." He, poet-laureate of his time, had solved the great secret. He knew, as Swamiji knew, that Ishvara dwelleth in the hearts of all beings; that all should flee to Him for shelter in every storm, and that by His grace the supreme

peace, the unassailable calm was a certain security.

The real philosopher, the truly religious man, has within himself the faculty of poise, of mental and spiritual equilibrium. He is unmoved by any apparent catastrophe, because he has acquired the righteous habit of trusting in the Absolute, the Peaceful, the One that is still and steadfast. "I am the Lord," He said in the Gita, "I change not. Therefore ye are not consumed." Stillness, calm, tranquility, poise; these are the abiding attributes of him who beholds the supreme Ishvara, indestructible within the destructible and who, taking refuge in Him, obtains, by His grace, the internal indestructible abode. Faith in the perpetual presence of the All-powerful is man's prime necessity; the Act of Faith which uplifts humanity to conscious oneness with divinity. As a singer of Western thought wedded to Western words has written,

O, for a faith that will not shrink

Though pressed by many a foe;

That will not tremble on the brink

Of poverty or woe.

A faith that shines most bright and clear

When tempests rage without;

That when in danger knows no fear,

In darkness feels no doubt."

Such a faith, underlying the perils of wealth or power, of poverty or suffering, endows its possessor with the charm of self-control and the key to aquiescent placidity.

There is, nevertheless, another peril which must be feared, a danger that must be shunned. This lies in the possibility of a desire for personal salvation at the cost of duty to others. Attached to that desire may be found a tendency toward the neglect of health, of business, and of friendships. "I will let all go, in order that I may follow Him and attain unto Him."

The splendid aspiration which is formulated in those words and elaborated in the conduct of the man who sincerely utters them, cannot be sufficiently admired; but, all the same, the fact cannot be disguised, that many devotees who employ such a phrase, seek themselves rather than the legitimate object of their goal. We are warned in a well-known Sanskrit text not to imitate the manner or the mental standpoint of the smooth-voiced smug-faced professor of religion who envelopes himself in spiritual pride. It is indeed exactly that sort of man who, relying upon his suppositious sanctity, expects to be nourished and clothed at the expense of other people. He desires to be regarded as "holy" in order that he may escape from labour of any kind and exist upon doles dealt out to him by kindly folk who are too simple, too trustful, to discriminate between the real saint and the pretender. In India, famous for its Sannyasins of undeniable reputation, there are spurious imitators. All have heard of, and some have seen, men clad from head to feet in ashes only, men posing in arresting and painful postures, exciting the reverence and generosity of

passers-by, yet so proud of their pose that they permit themselves to be photographed for the admiration of the world. Occident and Orient can, alas! both claim sinners of the same sort, differing only in mannerisms suited to surroundings.

Another and infinitely more helpful chord is, happily, struck from time to time and its music resounds through East and West alike. We may instance the following luminous passage from a sermon delivered in Westminster Abbey by Dr. Basil Wilberforce, late Chaplain to the House of Commons. Alluding to the final glory of the soul, the full completion of the divine purpose; complete identification with Universal Life; he said, "Godliness, Godlikeness, is indeed a noble attainment, but it may be marred by selfishness, by isolation, aloofness. Naturally its first action is to fertilise the being of its possessor; to make him holier, happier, purer; but it must be rescued from the taint of individualism, or it will warp down the character into that most unlovely thing, a narrow isolated religious bigot. It must be 'added to;' ("Add to your Godliness, love of the brethren." S. Peter); it must reach out to bless and vitalise others.

Another eminent English philosopher, a man of profoundly religious instinct and practice, Dr. James Martineau, wrote to the same purpose; "When Paul gained the conviction that he was raised above the tomb of mortality; when he first looked into the opening avenue of ages and saw himself with living feet, securely passing through; when he felt that he could defy the perils of shipwreck and the sword of persecution, did it abate his earnestness and whisper to him that he had time enough? Did it turn his eager haste into an easy stroll? Did it fill him with moral indifference to the world that slum-

bered above the elements of explosion? Far otherwise. It cooled his personal interests and, so far, made him of quiet heart, but it set his conscience on fire and he spoke truth, soothed sorrows and warned sins. The true disciple renders service after service. Each conviction, each suggestion of duty, constitutes a distinct and separate call of God which should never be slighted, never wasted."

We are thus taught imperatively, by the Guru of East and West, that while contemplation and meditation have a vital part to play in the uplift of man to God, action is no less essential, and service towards others a true sign of him whose footsteps climb the Upper Way.

ERIC HAMMOND.

THE HINDU IDEAL OF GOODNESS.

IN a previous article we considered the meaning of the Hindu conception of the Absolute and particularly its difference from that of the Occidental view. Similarly at present we shall address ourselves to the Hindu ideal of goodness in order to find out if it be the same or if it differs from the Western idea of goodness.

By the Western idea of goodness we mean two things: namely, the Greek ideal and also the Hebraic as given to the West by Christianity. The former, to designate it broadly, is external, while the latter is inner. And since the present civilisation of the West draws its inspiration from Judea and Greece, we must consider those two intrinsically before we compare the ideal supposedly born of their blending—the present idea of goodness in the West—with that of India. Suffice it to say here that the Hindu ideal of goodness has all that the modern Western conception possesses without India's borrowing from any external sources.

First of all, if we take up the Greek idea of goodness we notice that though the Greeks emphasised the avoidance of extremes in ethical matters (the very word Eudemonism conveys that meaning) yet we find that the usual Greek had more of

the outer conception of goodness than the inner. For instance, a Greek lawyer would tell a lie in order to win a case. Take another illustration: A woman was being tried in a Greek court of law for committing some sin. Her lawyer won the case thus: Towards the end of his speech, he suddenly disrobed her before the court and exclaimed, "Can a beautiful body like hers be guilty of committing any sin?" She was at once found 'not guilty'. Here we have the question of a moral idea settled altogether by externality, namely, physical beauty. To a Greek, if a man was ill he was considered bad; if he was deformed, he was considered sinful. On the contrary, if a citizen was a healthy lawyer and told lies in order to win cases, and owned slaves, he was considered to be very good. This proves conclusively that the Greek conception of goodness was mostly external.

Compare with that the conception of the Jews. Job as a moral figure was an embodiment of goodness, yet he was devoid of any physical excellence. If Job was pointed out to a Greek, he would at once characterise him as evil. On the contrary Job was goodness itself. His goodness was intrinsic and not external.

To the Jew moral excellence was an inner excellence which had nothing to do with physical welfare or external possessions. To a Jew, a lie is an evil even if it does good to one for it has to be judged by an inner standard—"As a man thinketh, so is he."

Christianity, which gave this inner conception of goodness of the Hebrew race to the Western world, summed up the ideal community of goodness, as an inner community in these words: "The kingdom of God is within you."

In the West to-day we find a blending, though not thorough, of the Christian and Greek conceptions of goodness. During the war we notice that the German people have been condemned because of their morality based on externality—or efficiency. In other words Germany has been judged by the inner standards of goodness and has been found wanting. This proves that the inner standard of goodness is the real standard for the West after all.

In the case of India, the inner standard is the only standard to which the Hindu race has adhered these forty centuries. "Albeit, who wealth and power do most desire, least fixity of soul have such, least hold on heavenly meditation."—"Yet the right act is less, far less, than the right-thinking mind. Seek refuge in thy soul; have there thy heaven." (Bhagavad-Gita, Bk. 2. Ch. 2., Arnold's translation.)

That the inner life is the only life is not only the conclusion of the Hindu sages but it is the conclusion of all the Great Ones of all the races. At present, if we were to point out the strength of India, we should say it lies in her inner life. Her religion is a constant ritual of the inner divinity that runs through every fibre of her life. In the West, on the contrary,

they are waking up to the realisation that the structure of life should be religious and inner. And the present condemnation of Germany is an emphatic repudiation of the external standards—efficiency. In the beginning, it has been remarked that the Western idea of goodness has not only the inner ideal of the Hebrew race as given to the world by Christ, but she has also the ideal of the Greeks. Christ and his followers enhanced the evolution of the moral ideal of the West by giving it the inner standard of morality, which includes the Greek ethical ideals. That is why Christ commanded, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the rest will be added unto it." The inner ideal of goodness includes the outer and not vice versa.

India, having had the ideal standard of inner goodness, has never bowed to externality. Hers has been the fate to live from within "त्वया हृदीकेषु हृदिस्थितेन यथा नियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि"—"As 'Thou directest, O Lord, from within the heart, so shall I behave.'" As the West is saving its life to-day by returning to the inner ideal of goodness as taught by Christ; so if India continues, as she has done in the past, to adhere unflinchingly to the inner ideal of goodness, she will not only tide over the storms of to-day but she will be the great helper of the future. It is sad that there are Indians, God be thanked that they are a minority, who believe in the external ideal of goodness. Let us hope and pray that India will turn a deaf ear to their pleadings. The task before us is to live and glorify the inner life and the inner ideal of goodness. In doing that we shall not only save ourselves but the future of humanity.

DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Continued from page 61.)

The "Ramakrishna Punthi" (Life of Sri Ramakrishna in Bengali verse) that A— has sent is very good, but there is no glorification of the *Shakti* at the opening, which is a great defect. Tell him to remedy it in the second edition. Always bear this in mind that we are now standing before the gaze of the world, and that people are watching every one of our actions and utterances. Remember this and work.

* * Be on the lookout for a site for our Math. * * If it be at some little distance from Calcutta, no harm. Wherever we shall build our Math, there we shall have a stir made. Very glad to learn about M— Chakravarty. The Andes have turned into the holy Gaya, I see! Where is he? Please give him, Sj. Bejoy Goswami and our friends my cordial greetings. * * To beat an opponent one needs sword and buckle, so carefully learn English and Sanskrit. K—'s English is getting nicer everyday, while that of S— is deteriorating. Tell S— to give up the flowery style. It is extremely difficult to write a flowery style in a foreign tongue. Please convey to him a hundred thousand bravos from me! There's a hero indeed. * * Well done, all of you! Bravo lads! The beginning is excellent. Go on in that way. If the adder of jealousy does not come in, there is no fear! माभौ:—"Cheer up!" "मद्भक्तानाञ्च ये भक्ताःस्तेमे भक्ततमा मता।"—"Those who serve My devotees are My best devotees." Have all of you a little grave bearing. I am not writing any book on Hinduism at present. But I am jotting down my thoughts. Every religion is an expression, a language to express the same truth, and we must speak to each in his own language. That S— has grasped this, is all right. It will be time

enough to look to Hinduism later on. Do you think people in this country would be much attracted if I talk of Hinduism?—The very name of narrowness in ideas will scare them away! The real thing is—the *Religion* taught by Sri Ramakrishna, let the Hindus call it Hinduism,—and others call it in their own way. Only you must proceed slowly—शनैः पन्थाः—"One must make journeys slowly." Give my blessings to D— the new recruit. I have very little time to write, always lecture, lecture, lecture. Purity, Patience, Perseverance. * * You must ask those numerous people who are now paying heed to Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, to help you pecuniarily to a certain extent. How can the Math be maintained unless they help you? You must not be shy of making this plan to all. * *

There is no gain in hastening my return from this country. In the first place, a little sound made here will resound there a great deal. Then, the people of this country are immensely rich and are bold enough to pay. While the people of our country have neither money nor the least bit of boldness.

You will know everything by degrees. Was Sri Ramakrishna the Saviour of India merely? It is this narrow idea that has brought about India's ruin, and her welfare is an impossibility so long as this is not rooted out. Had I the money I would send each one of you to travel all over the world. No great idea can have a place in the heart unless one steps out of his little corner. It will be verified in time. Every great achievement is done slowly. Such is the Lord's will. * *

Why didn't any of you write about D— and H—? I shall be glad to know if you watch their whereabouts. That S— is feeling

miserable is because his mind is not yet pure like the water of the Ganges. It is not yet selfless, but will be in time. He will have no misery if he can give up the little crookedness and be straightforward. My special loving greetings to R— and H—. Take great care of them. * * Never forget that R— was the special object of Sri Ramakrishna's love. Let nothing daunt you, who on earth has the power to snub us so long as the Lord favours us? Even if you are at your last breath, be not afraid. Work on with the intrepidity of a lion but at the sametime with the tenderness of a flower. Let this year's Sri Ramakrishna Festival be celebrated in great pomp. Let the feeding be quite ordinary—the Prasāda being distributed offhand in earthen plates among the assembled. That will do. There should be readings from Sri Ramakrishna's Life. Place books like the Vedas and the Vedānta together and perform Arati before them. * * Avoid issuing invitation cards of the old style. “आनन्दबे भवन्तं साशीर्वादं भगवत्तोरामकृष्णस्य बहुमानपुरःसरम्”—“With Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's blessings and our great esteem we have the pleasure to invite you.”—Write some such line, and then write that to defray the expenses of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday Festival and those of the maintenance of the Math, we want his assistance. That if he likes he may kindly send the money to such and such, at such and such address, and so on. Also add a page in English. The term “Lord Ramakrishna” has no meaning. You must give it up. Write ‘Bhagavan’ in English characters, and add a line or two in English: (Heading) The Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

Sir, we have great pleasure in inviting you to join us in celebrating the —th anniversary of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa. For the celebration of this great occasion and for the maintenance of the Alambazar Math funds are absolutely necessary. If you think that the cause is worthy of your sympathy we shall be very grateful to

receive your contribution to the great work.

Yours obediently

(Date) (Place)

(Name)

If you get enough money, spend only a little of it and keep the surplus as a reserve fund to defray your expenses. On the plea of offering the food to the Lord, do not make everybody wait till he is sick, to have a stale and unsavoury dinner. Have two filters made and use that filtered water for both cooking and drinking purposes. Boil the water before filtering. If you do this, you will never more hear of malaria. Keep a strict eye on everybody's health. If you can give up lying on the floor,—in other words, if you can get the money to do it, it will be excellent indeed. Dirty clothes are the chief cause of diseases. * * About the offering, let me tell you that only a little Pāyasanna (milk-rice, with sugar) will do. He used to love that alone. It is true that the worship-room is a help to many, but it is no use indulging in *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika* food. Let the ceremonials give place to a certain extent to a little study of the Gita or the Upanishads or other sacred books. What I mean is this,—let there be as little materialism as possible, with the maximum of spirituality. * * Did Sri Ramakrishna come for this or that particular individual, or for the world at large? If the latter, then you must present him in such a light that the whole world may understand him. *You must not identify yourselves with any life of him written by anybody, nor give your sanction to any.* There is no danger so long as they do not come out associated with our name. * * “Say yea, yea, to all and stick to your own.”

* * A thousand thanks to M— for his kindly helping us. He is a very liberal-hearted man. * * About, —, he will attain the highest good by doing his bit of work attentively, that is, by simply serving Sri Ramakrishna's children. * * T— is doing very good work. Bravo! Well done! That is

what we want. Let me see all of you shoot like so many meteors! What is G— doing? Some Zeminders in Rajputana respect him. Tell him to get some money from them as *Bhiksha*, then he is a man. * *

Just now I read A—'s book. Give him a hundred thousand hearty embraces from me. Through his pen Sri Ramakrishna is manifesting himself. Blessed is A—! Let him recite that *Punthi* before all. He must recite it before all in the Festival. If the work be too large, let him read extracts of it. Well, I do not find a single irrelevant word in it. I cannot tell in words the joy I have experienced by reading his book. Try all of you to give the book an extensive sale. Then ask A— to go from village to village to preach. Well done A—! He is doing his work. Go from village to village and proclaim to all Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, can there be a more blessed lot than this? I tell you, A—'s book and A— himself must electrify the masses. Dear, dear, A—, I bless you with all my heart, my dear brother. May the Lord sit in your tongue! Go and spread his teachings from door to door. There is no need whatever of your becoming a Sannyasin. * * A— is the future apostle for the masses of Bengal. Take great care of A—, his faith and devotion have borne fruit.

Ask A— to write these few points in the third section of his book, "the Propagation of the Faith."

1. Whatever the Vedas, the Vedanta, and all other Incarnations have done in the past, Sri Ramakrishna lived to practise in the course of a single life.

2. One cannot understand the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Incarnations and such like things without understanding his life. For, he was the explanation.

3. From the very date that he was born, has sprung the Satya-yuga (Golden Age). Henceforth there is an end to all sorts of distinctions, and everyone down to the Chan-

dāla will be sharers in the Divine Love. The distinction between man and woman, between the rich and the poor, the literate and the illiterate, Brahmans and Chandālas,—he lived to root out all. And he was the harbinger of Peace—the separation between Hindus and Mahommedans, between Hindus and Christians, all are now things of the past. That fight about distinctions that there was, belonged to another era. In this Satya-yuga the tidal waves of Sri Ramakrishna's Love has unified all.

Tell him to expand these ideas and write them in his own style.

Whoever—man or woman—will worship Sri Ramakrishna, be he or she ever so low, will be then and there converted into the very highest. Another thing, the Motherhood of God is prominent in this Incarnation. He used to dress himself as a woman,—he was, as it were, our Mother,—and we must likewise look upon all women as the reflections of the Mother. In India there are two great evils. Trampling on the women, and grinding the poor through caste restrictions. He was the Saviour of Women, Saviour of the masses, Saviour of all, high and low. And let A— introduce his worship in every home—Brahman or Chandāla, man or woman,—everyone has the right to worship him. Whoever will worship him only with devotion, shall be blessed for ever.

Tell him to write in this strain. Never mind for anything—the Lord will be at his elbow.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

P. S. * * * Ask S— to send me a copy each of the Narada and Sandilya-Sutras, and one of the Yogavasistha, that has been translated in Calcutta. I want the English translation of the last, not a Bengali edition. * *



WITH THE SWAMIS IN AMERICA.

VII.

THE Shanti Ashrama was the crowning success of Swami Turiyananda's labour in America. Here his spiritual ardour could have free play. Here he lived far away from the conventionalities of Western life with students who loved him and who were sincere in their desire to realise the Truth. Here he was free. And when I speak of the Shanti Ashrama as a success, I do not mean that there the Swami made a large number of disciples, but that those who accepted him as their spiritual teacher were changed, though not all to the same degree, into men and women of higher aspirations, of greater faith and of some actual spiritual attainment. And this was not a temporary change as the succeeding years have proved. That this work was accomplished in less than two years, part of which time the Swami was away from the Ashrama, is little short of marvelous.

I met and lived with these students again, many years after the Swami had returned to India, and without a single exception they were all agreed that these few months with him in the Shanti Ashrama constituted the most important period in their lives. And that is the reason why the Shanti Ashrama has always remained so dear to these students. The place is to them a holy place to which they return, as circumstances allow, as one returns to a place of pilgrimage. The memory of these early Ashrama days is and will always remain with the students an occasion of great happiness and satisfaction. The Swami is as beloved to his disciples in America to-day as he was when he lived there with them, now more than sixteen years ago.

Some of these Ashrama students have since departed from this world. Sankari was one of the first to be called away. She was a young woman, unmarried and a member of the "Home of Truth" in Alameda, across the Bay from San Francisco. The Home of Truth was an offshoot of Christian Science. One of their beliefs was that every disease had its cause in some defect in the character. By knowing the disease the defect of character could be traced. Anger, jealousy, greed, hatred,

each of these defects produced its corresponding disease. The cure for the disease was to correct the moral defect.

Swami Vivekananda had been a guest at the Home of Truth for several weeks. He left a deep impression there and many of the teachers of this Home became his followers. When Swami Turiyananda came to California they flocked around him and not a few of these accompanied him to the Shanti Ashrama. Sankari was one of them. She often told me how Swamiji would keep the members of the Home spell-bound when he talked to them about Vedanta. For hours Swamiji would go on and on and the listeners fearing to interrupt the flow of his spiritual outpouring dared not stir. With bated breath they would sit and listen. They were carried off their feet, as it were, by his eloquence, they felt as if they were soaring in a higher sphere, they were entranced. And only after the Swamiji was silent would they feel themselves tied again to this mundane existence. "You have been bitten by the cobra," Swamiji said one morning, "the poison will have its effect, you will never be your old selves again, the Master has accepted you."

Those who had really been "bitten by the cobra" could not return to their former practices. The Home of Truth became too narrow a place for them, they had to breathe a freer air. The Shanti Ashrama afforded them breathing space. Here they were with him who "lived what I have taught you." And under this loving guidance they also were to live what they had learned. Sankari was amongst these, sincere to the backbone.

Some years after the Swami Turiyananda had returned to India, she contracted a painful disease. Patiently and with great courage she battled with the enemy. She suffered pain without a complaint, she struggled silently. But the disease had taken a firm hold on her and she could not shake it off. The end was drawing near and she realised that her days on earth were counted. Loving friends surrounded her and nursed her with tender

care. Then one day she called for one of her most intimate friends whose acquaintance she had made at the Shanti Ashrama. "Mira," she said, "the Master is calling me, will you repeat his name to me?" This friend stayed at her bedside the entire day and the following night. In turns she and the patient called on the Lord. Sankari grew weaker and weaker, her voice came in a whisper. "Do not exert yourself, dear," Mira said, "I am strong and I shall continue to call on the Lord." Satisfied and with a smile she obeyed. Early morning came. The patient was very weak. She moved her head slightly as if trying to look at Mira. A soft whisper came,—Ramakrishna; and the lips were silent forever. The wasted body remained, the spirit was free. "You have been bitten by the cobra, the Master has accepted you."

This is but one example of the change wrought in the hearts of the students who came to the Ashrama. Other instance we have given in previous issues of this Magazine.* It is true, the initial change in most of the students had taken place before they came to the Ashrama. Otherwise they would probably not have gone there. But could that change have been sustained and pushed onward had they not had the opportunity of breaking away from their old surroundings and influences, had they not been constantly encouraged and ministered unto by the Swami Turiyananda?

Unfortunately, excess of work had affected Swami Turiyananda's health and this combined with the desire to see Swamiji once more, made him decide to return to India, at least for a visit. Much as we regretted it, we understood that the change was necessary. We hoped that the long sea-voyage would restore the Swami's health and that in India he would find the rest he needed. We realise that it would be a great satisfaction to him to meet his beloved Swamiji again and his other brother-Sannyasins. We hoped that after a few years, at the most, we would have the Swami with us again.

During our long association with him the Swami had sometimes told us about the life of the Sannyasins in India, how these monks renounce everything for God, how they wander over the land

preaching and teaching and begging their simple fare; he had sometimes spoken of the grandeur of the Himalayas, of the simple life of the villagers, of the holy atmosphere at places of pilgrimage and more often about the beauty and the sacredness associated with his beloved 'Mother Ganges'; but seldom did he dwell on the mere physical aspect of things. Once he said: "You see, I have learned to look for beauty within, so the external beauty of things does not always affect me as it does those who look for beauty outside." In fact, we had not learned very much about the ordinary, every-day life and customs of the Hindus as a race. India had been presented and interpreted to us from the spiritual aspect.

And now, when the Swami was about to leave us, I said to him jokingly: "Swami, I have lived with you so long, but I do not know much more about India than when I first met you." The Swami's reply was very significant. "My boy," he said, "I have given you the very best that India has to give; it is a great treasure, keep it carefully."

I have now lived in India many years and I realise how very true these words are. Yes, the Swami had given us the very best that India has to give,—that priceless treasure that India has fostered for countless ages and that now once more she offers freely to all the world.

The Swami had made us Hindus even while we were living in America. We had been transformed, we had been made to assimilate that for which India and her people have always stood; he had made us love and admire the soul, the life-throb, the ideals of the Hindus, he had made us understand that the pulse-beat of India is her eternal religion. To become Hindu is a process that cannot be forced by external means; it is a natural growth, assimilation, a change in the mental make-up. To become a true Hindu involves experiences of a sacred nature, experiences which one does not get by simply visiting this holy land, experiences that go beyond the surface, experiences that relate to the soul.

India possesses something that lies beyond the phenomenal, something which the senses cannot bring to our notice, something that lies deep hidden in the human heart. And when one comes in contact with that, then one becomes a true Hindu. To be a true Hindu, one must become

* "In Memoriam," Prabuddha Bharata Sept. 1916 and Feb. 1917.

the spiritual child of the Indian Rishis and sages, one must sit (metaphorically speaking) at their feet and learn, one must attempt to follow in their footsteps. Then we are true Hindus, with one common aim,—to work out our own salvation and to live for the good of all.

The Swami had taught us to make God-realisation the one aim of our life; he had shown us the way; it rested with us how far we would profit by his teaching. "My work, for the present, is done," he said, "I have not left anything unfinished. Mother knows the rest. This Ashrama is Mother's place. She has created this place for you all, make the best use of it."

And so the day drew near that the Swami was to leave us. One of the students was to take charge of the Ashrama till the arrival from India, of another Swami. The Swami called this student to his tent on the eve of his departure.

As we have already noticed, the Swami left every one free to work in his own way. He only, suggested and taught principles. Meditation, he always said, was necessary,—meditation and renunciation. So, when he called this student, he gave him only general advice. Be impartial, listen patiently if there is any complaint, be just and pure and trust in Mother; treat everyone equally and let the students feel that you love each and everyone of them. This, I think, was the sum and substance of his last instruction. And then the Swami departed.

The same student who was left in charge of the Shanti Ashrama now, had been in charge during the Swami's absence, for a few months, when at the earnest request of the students of Los Angeles and San Francisco the Swami had gone to work with them. And here I may give a few extracts from letters written by the Swami during this absence to the student in charge of the Ashrama. It will give the reader an idea of the spirit in which the work was conducted,—a spirit which the Swami constantly kept alive and which after him the students have tried to keep alive to the best of their ability and with earnest endeavour.

The Swami wrote from Los Angeles in the year 1901.

My dear—

Don't get discouraged or disheartened. Why should it be always sunshine and good times? Let

Mother's will be done. Never mind sunshine or rain, we must not forget Mother at any time. Even if we don't see Her, why should we lose heart! She appears again in our view. She knows what is best for us. Once we have given over to Her, what right have we to think of ourselves again! It is not so easy to do as to say, of that I am sure, but there is no other way out. Whether we see or don't see, Mother is our only place of rest. There are ups and downs in all hearts, but we should not give way to them.

* * * *

Real, genuine sympathy alone works wonders. That is the one thing omnipotent in this world of sorrows and weaknesses. Ask of Mother for that and you will have it. Think not about yourself but only for others. That is renunciation, that is religion, that is all. You have died, why do you think of yourself? Have you not given everything over to Mother! Why then think of yourself again! Never care for position. Give up all such ideas. Work is worship. Everything is in the life we live, not in position. Mother knows the heart and sees the heart and arranges things accordingly. Let your light so shine, that everybody can see it. Let your work be silent and in secret and your Mother who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. The fowls of the air have their nests to rest, but the Son of man had nowhere to lay his head. Jesus had no position and millions and millions of hearts are his place, or he is the place where millions of weary souls go for rest. Go on my dear boy; live the life. Pray for it earnestly and sincerely.

It pleased me immensely to read the account of the celebration in the Ashrama of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday anniversary. We observed the day here in talk of him and prayer. May Sri Ramakrishna arouse in us the real spirit of renunciation and love for Mother, whose very personification he himself was.

* * * *

Be strong my dear boy! Don't give in to anything whatever. It is not good to be weak; the weak must go to the wall. This is the law of the world. But what have you to do with the world any more? Mother's child, good or bad, weak or strong, you have no other to look up to but Mother! Others, who do not know, may think of

temporal help. But you can never think that way, I am sure !

Sri Ramakrishna is the concrete embodiment of the Vedantic Truth. Because in his life he manifested in full, all the subtle truths that we read in the Vedanta philosophy. Pray for unflinching love and devotion and you will have everything.

There is no world outside. It is what we project outside. But how difficult is it to understand this; and how much more difficult to remember it always, even after understanding it.

We feel unhappy when we make ourselves small. We feel miserable when we think of ourselves as

finite. That is the bane. Yet we forget and are in the whirlpool of Maya every once again. But thanks to the grace of Mother, we remember it again soon. "There is no happiness in that which is finite; that which is finite is perishable. That which is universal is Blissfulness itself." Know the universal ! That is thy real Self."

May we never lose sight of this our real Self, which is the Self of all, our dear Mother, whose children we are.

The reader will readily understand how helpful, how encouraging and how welcome these letters were.

A BRAHMACHARIN.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 69.)

निरस्तमायाकृतसर्वभेदं

नित्यं सुखं निष्कलमप्रमेयम् ।

अरूपमव्यक्तमनाख्यमव्ययं

ज्योतिःस्वयं किञ्चिदिदं चकास्ति ॥२३८॥

238. Transcending all the diversities created by Maya or Nescience, eternal, ever beyond the reach of pain, indivisible, unconditioned, formless, undifferentiated, nameless, immutable, self-luminous.

ज्ञातृज्ञेयज्ञानशून्यमनन्तं निर्विकल्पकम् ।

केवलाखण्डचिन्मात्रं परं तत्त्वं विदुर्धुधाः ॥२३९॥

239. Sages realise the Supreme Principle, Brahman,—in which there is no differentiation of knower, knowledge and known, infinite, transcendent, the Essence of Knowledge Absolute.

अहेयमनुपादेयं मनोवाचामगोचरम् ।

अप्रमेयमनाद्यन्तं ब्रह्म पूर्णमहं महः ॥२४०॥

240. Which can be neither thrown away nor taken up, which is beyond the reach of mind and speech, immeasurable, with-

out beginning and end, the Whole, one's very Self, and of surpassing glory.

[Neither thrown.....taken up—Because It is not a material thing but one's Real Self.]

तत्त्वं पदाभ्यामभिधीयमानयो-

ब्रह्मात्मनोः शोधितयोर्यदीत्यम् ।

श्रुत्या तयोस्तत्त्वमसीति सम्य-

गेकत्वमेव प्रतिपाद्यते मुहुः ॥२४१॥

ऐक्यं तयोर्लक्षितयोर्न वाच्ययो-

र्निगद्यतेऽन्योन्यविरुद्धधर्मिणोः ।

खद्योतभान्वोरिव राजभृत्ययोः

कूपाम्बुराशयोः परमाणुमेवौः ॥२४२॥

241-2. If thus the Sruti, in the dictum "Thou art That" (*Tat-Tvam-Asi*), repeatedly establishes the absolute identity of Brahman (or Isvara) and Jiva, denoted by the terms That (*Tat*) and Thou (*Tvam*) respectively, divesting these terms of their relative associations, then it is the identity of their implied, not literal, meanings which is sought to be inculcated, for they are of contradictory attributes to each other—

like the sun and a glow-worm, the king and a servant, the ocean and a well, or Mount Meru and an atom.

[*If thus the Sruti etc.*—The reference is to the sixth Chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad, where Uddālaka Aruni tries to impress on his son, Svetaketu, the identity of Jiva and Brahman in various ways.]

तयोर्विरोधोऽयमुपाधिकल्पितो.

न वास्तवः कश्चिदुपाधिरेवः ।

ईशस्य माया महदादिकारणं

जीवस्य कार्यं शृणु पञ्चकोशम् ॥२४३॥

243. This contradiction between them is created by superimposition, and is not something real. This superimposition, in the case of Isvara (the Lord), is Maya or Nescience, which is the cause of Mahat and the rest,—and in the case of the Jiva (the individual soul), listen,—the five Sheaths, which are the effects of Maya, stand for it.

[*Mahat*—See note on Sloka 123.

And the rest—the grosser manifestations that proceed from Mahat.

Five Sheaths—See note on Sloka 125.]

एतावुपाधी परजीवयोस्तयोः

सम्यङ्निरासे न परो न जीवः ।

राज्यं नरेन्द्रस्य भटस्य खेटक-

स्तयोरपोहे भटो न राजा ॥२४४॥

244. These two are the superimpositions of the Isvara and the Jiva, and when these are perfectly eliminated there is neither Isvara nor Jiva. A kingdom is the insignia of a king, and a shield of the soldier, and when these are taken away, there is neither king nor soldier.

[*Neither king nor soldier*—he is only a man then. Similarly, if we take away the omniscience omnipotence etc. from Isvara, and deficiencies of knowledge and power etc. from the Jiva, only Brahman remains as the substance of both.]

अथात आदेश इति श्रुतिः स्वयं

निषेधति ब्रह्मणि कल्पितं द्वयम् ।

श्रुतिप्रमाणानुगृहीतबोधा-

त्तयोर्निरासः करणीय एव ॥२४५॥

245. The Vedas themselves in the words "Now then is the injunction" etc., repudiates the duality imagined in the Brahman. One must needs eliminate those two superimpositions by dint of realisation supported by the authority of the Vedas.

[*The Vedas etc.*—The reference is to the Brihad-aranyaka Upa. II. iii. 6.]

नेदं नेदं कल्पितत्वान्न सत्यं

रज्जुहृष्टव्यालवत्स्वप्नवच्च ।

इत्थं दृश्यं साधु युक्त्या व्यपोह्य

ज्ञेयः पश्चादकभावस्तयोर्थः २४६॥

246. Neither this gross nor this subtle universe (is the Atman). Being imagined they are not real,—like the snake seen in the rope, and like dreams.—Perfectly eliminating the objective world in this way by means of reasoning, one should next realise the oneness that underlies the Isvara and the Jiva.

ततस्तु तौ लक्षणाया सुलक्ष्यौ

तयोरखण्डैकरसत्वसिद्धये ।

नालं जहत्या न तथाऽजहत्या

किन्तुभयार्थात्मिकयैव भाव्यम् ॥२४७॥

247. Hence those two terms (Isvara and Jiva) must be carefully considered through their *implied* meanings, so that their absolute identity may be established. The method of wholesale rejection will not do, nor will the method of retaining *in toto* do either. One must reason out through the process which combines the two.

[There are three kinds of Lakshanā or implied meaning. The Jahatī, the Ajahatī and the Bhāga Lakshanā. The first is that in which one of the terms has to give up its primary meaning. For example, the phrase गंगायां घोषः does not mean

that a village of cowherds is *in* the Ganges, but *on* the Ganges. The second kind is that in which the primary meaning is retained but something is supplied to make it clear, as the sentence श्वेतो धावति means "a white (horse) is running." In the third kind of Lakṣṇā each of the terms has to give up a part of its connotation, see the next Sloka.]

स देवदत्तोऽयमितीह वैकता
विरुद्धधर्माशंभपास्य कथ्यते ।
अथ तथा तत्त्वमसीतिवाक्ये
विरुद्धधर्मानुभयत्र हित्वा ॥२४८॥

संलक्ष्य चिन्मात्रतया सदात्मनो-
रखण्डभावः परिचीयते बुधैः ।

एवं महावाक्यशतेन कथ्यते
ब्रह्मात्मनोरैक्यमखण्डभावः ॥२४९॥

248-9. Just as in the sentence, 'This is that Devadatta,' the identity is spoken of, eliminating the contradictory portions, so in the sentence 'Thou art That,' the wise man must give up the contradictory elements on both sides and recognise the identity of Isvara and Jiva, noticing carefully the essence of both, which is *Chit*, Knowledge Absolute. Thus hundreds of Scriptural texts inculcate the oneness and identity of Brahman and Jiva.

[*Contradictory portions*—Such as the differences of time and place etc.]

अस्थूलमित्येतदसन्निरस्य
सिद्धं स्वतो व्योमवदप्रतर्क्यम् ।

अतो मृषामात्रमिदं प्रतीतं
जहीहि यत्स्वात्मतया गृहीतम् ।

ब्रह्माहमित्येव विशुद्धबुद्ध्या
विद्धि स्वमात्मानमखण्डबोधम् ॥२५०॥

250. Eliminating the objective world,—the not-self, by such arguments as 'It is not gross' etc., (one realises the Atman), which is self-established, unattached like the sky, and beyond the range of thought. Therefore, dismiss this mere phantom of an

objective world which thou perceivest and which thou has accepted as thy own self. By means of the purified understanding that thou art Brahman, realise thy own Self, the Knowledge Absolute.

मृत्कार्यं सकलं घटादि सततं मुन्मात्रमेवाहितं
तद्वत्सज्जनितं सदात्मकमिदं सन्मात्रमेवाखिलं ।
यस्माज्जास्ति सतः परं किमपि तत्सत्यं स
आत्मा स्वयं ।

तस्मात्तत्त्वमसि प्रशान्तममलं ब्रह्माद्वयं यत्परम् ॥

251. All modifications of earth, such as the jar etc., which are always accepted by the mind as real, are (in reality) nothing but earth. Similarly this entire universe which is produced from the Real Brahman, is Brahman Itself and nothing but Brahman. Because there is nothing else whatever but Brahman, and That is the only self-existent Reality, our very Self, therefore thou art that pacified, pure, Supreme Brahman, the One without a second.

निद्राकल्पितदेशकालविषयज्ञात्रादि सर्वं यथा
मिथ्या तद्वदिहापि जाग्रति जगत्स्वाज्ञानकार्यत्वतः
यस्मादेवमिदं शरीरकरणप्राणाहमाद्यप्यस-
त्तस्मात्तत्त्वमसि प्रशान्तममलं ब्रह्माद्वयं यत्परम् ॥

252. As the place, time, objects, knower, etc. called up in dream are all unreal, so is also the world experienced here in the waking state, for it is all an effect of one's own ignorance. Because this body, the organs, and egoism etc. are also thus unreal, therefore thou art the Pacified, Pure, Supreme Brahman, the One without a second.

(To be continued.)

SRI SRIDHAR SWAMI—A STORY FROM HIS LIFE.

Sri Sridhar Swami has attained immortal fame in Sanskrit literature by his luminous commentaries on the two most important books of Hindu scriptures, the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and the Srimad Bhagavat. As in the case of numbers of other shining names of Indian religion, little is known of the personal incidents in their lives although humanity with its strong bias towards the personal hankers to clothe with human investments the lives of these personages and dwell on their loveable figures. But these great personages have kept their personality and the incidents of their personal life completely in the background, so that they come down to us as Impersonal teachers of Truth while their personalities are like shadows moving in the background of the beautiful and ennobling thoughts which we read in their masterpieces.

But tradition which is a faithful guide in the case of Hindu religious culture, which has come down from generation to generation, offers us glimpses of their lives and enables us to some extent to clothe with human details their loveable figures. Of Sridhar Swami it is told that he was born somewhere in Southern India and was famed as a great scholar versed in Sanskrit, and was in the court of some rich prince. That rare and priceless feeling, the longing for the realisation for the Supreme Truth had already dawned on his life, as it had come to many of his race. It had coloured his whole being and bringing home to him the impermanence of and the meanness of the prizes of life, was daily augmenting his desire to renounce everything and to devote himself wholeheartedly to the search after and realisation of the Truth. But having bound himself by ties of matrimony, his family love and duties held him back from his heart's desire to devote himself to the service and worship of God. Some years passed this way, when the one object on which his hearts' love had been given was removed from the scene of her earthly life—his wife died leaving a little son. This gave a rude shock to his easy modes of life, he was awakened to the realities of the un-

certainty and mortal conditions of life, determined to substitute it with a Vision of Love that would never change, a knowledge knowing which the riddle of life and death would be solved.

But the little son left behind by his deceased wife was a matter of consideration before he could devote his whole life to the worship of God. He was debating in his mind about the wherewithal to make a provision for his son's education and upbringing before his renouncing home and all family ties which must snap one day and to devote his whole life to the service and worship of God and God only, the only Relation in the world. While thus debating and much agitated, he happened to notice a curious event. A lizard's egg had fallen from the roof to the floor, as it broke, it revealed a small lizard within floating in a mass of mucous matter—the egg evidently being near the end of incubation. Noticing it more minutely he found that it was moving and opening and closing its tiny mouth as if wanting some food. As he stood looking on he thought in his mind that surely this lizard would die, as it was too weak to get out of the matrix and too small to procure any food for itself. 'If any one is helpless and in imminence of death, this is one, for there is none to help it procure food or be of any service to it.' As he was thus thinking, a fly in the course of its erratic flight came circling near it and got embedded in the matrix and was as quickly gulped down by it. Then with a blow it came to the Swami's mind, that even for such a tiny, insignificant and helpless creature, there is One who brings about such a marvellous combination of circumstances that help, food reaches the most insignificant and helpless of God's creatures. The provision for his little son which is agitating him such—how insincere, hypocritical, and faithless of him that his faith is in a few rupees for his son's provision and not on Divine providence, relying on whom he is renouncing home and daring to throw all earthly help and stand a penniless beggar. What a sham, make-believe his idea of God! Is He a poetic imagery or a hard ringing Fact which subsists when everything else has vanished. Thus his mind was illumined with a great radiance his heart was filled with indomitable faith and elation and he inwardly spoke: "How faithless of me to have all these fears and anxieties for my son,

preventing me from giving myself completely to His worship. The same Divine Providence who looks after his own creation, who notices a sparrow's fall, for whom I dare to throw everything overboard, will if I am sincere in my love for Him look after my son." After he left home the rich prince who held the Pandit in high esteem, took his son under his care and provided for his upbringing.

This event must have made a deep impression on the life of Sridhar Swami and moulded into a settled conviction, nay a realisation of his life, which he must have found verified many times before it attained to that great certitude of conviction. For we find in his commentary on the Gita in explaining that grand promise by Bhagavan Sri Krishna to Arjuna, "कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति।"—"O son of Kunti, boldly declare, my devotees do not come to grief or ruin," Sridhar Swami overleaps the bounds of the restrained and close reasoning commentary and breaks out into an impassioned apostrophe: "O Arjuna, go to the council of the worldly-wise men where they are quarrelling and doubting the fact of Divine Providence and declare with great authority and vehemence born of the dead certitude of conviction, by the beat of drums and clenched fists "there is no ruination for the devotees of God, they never come to grief."

It is a wonderful phenomenon which we meet in religious biography of both East and West—this fact of Divine Providence and divine help even of material things brought about by the most unexpected and impossible combination of circumstances. Those who have dared to throw all earthly helps, who have divested themselves of all external adjuncts, stood naked before the world, and ready to suffer all extremities and meet death even for His sake relying on nothing except their God and love for Him, know that there is Divine Providence looking, that a Merciful Hand behind the veil of matter reaches help and succour in the most untoward and least expected of circumstances by the most marvellous and impossible combination of events. Few of us can reach that height of renunciation and faith in God to dare to throw away everything, all expectation of earthly help from the mind and to rely only on the Lord and prepared to meet and suffer anything; therefore spiritual laws

of Divine Providence never come in the way of our lives and we can never for our lives believe in them—such is our great faith in matter and material laws. But for those who can, this certitude of Divine Providence adds infinite freedom, courage to their beings, and authority to their words setting them apart, towering over the ordinary run of mankind.

LORD RONALDSHAY AT THE BELUR MATH.

(From A. B. Patrika.)

On Friday the 7th March Lord Ronaldshay landed at the jetty of the Belur Math erected by Messrs. Hoare Miller & Co. for the Utsav of the 9th March. His Excellency was met by the Vice-President, Swami Shivananda and Secy. Swami Saradananda, the President being away ill at Calcutta under medical treatment.

The Secretary welcomed His Excellency on behalf of the Order and expressed the gratitude of the Order for His Excellency's favouring them with the visit. He was led to the inner compound of the Math premises where under the mango tree were provided seats for His Excellency and the party. On his way he asked the Secretary as to how many monks were stopping there and on being told about thirty to forty including monks and Brahmacharins wanted to know what was meant by Brahmacharins. The Secretary explained that the Brahmacharins are entitled to enter the Order after remaining in training a few years and on being asked what the period was he was told that there being no limit, it all depends upon the capacity of the man, but generally 3 to 5 years is the period.

On taking his seat while others were standing out of respect he asked the Secretary if they followed any system of religious practices and was replied that they followed the Patanjali system of Raja Yoga and meditations—which system had been nicely dealt with in English and published by the late Swami Vivekananda in the year 1896 in America and England, and that this book had acquired such a world-wide reputation that it had

been translated into various languages including Russian, French and German. Here the Secretary presented His Excellency some of the leading works of Swami Vivekananda including the Raja Yoga. His Excellency then asked the Secretary if he could tell him why most of the Sannyasins besmear their bodies with ashes to which he replied "the ashes represent what is left of the wood after it has been burnt out or destroyed. So it is used as a symbol to make them remember that their goal is to reach the Absolute Being who alone remains on the destructions of the universe." Hearing which His Excellency said "so it is used as a symbol of Destruction"—to which the Secretary replied "yes—the destruction or merging of the Universe to its cause—the Absolute Being." His Excellency then asked "is not the teaching of Theosophy akin to these principles of the Hindu Shastras which you teach." Had Mrs. Annie Besant ever been to your Math!" The Secretary said "No—Mrs. Besant had not been to the Math but the teaching of Theosophy although akin to that of Hindu Shastras—there is a difference; for instance, Theosophy as represented by Col. Olcott has drawn a good deal from Buddhist rather than Hindu Shastras—on the other hand Theosophy as taught by Mrs. Besant has a good deal of Hinduism in it—yet there are great differences for instance, Theosophy teaches that a man earns his salvation or freedom of the soul, after a certain number of births, whereas Hindu Shastras teach that salvation can be obtained even in this life if one struggles very hard. His Excellency then said "Does not the Vedanta say that the Universe is a projection of the Absolute and that the chain of evolution and involution of the Universe is going on for all the time?" To which the Secretary replied "yes, during Mahapralaya comes the involution or the return of the universe into the infinite Being but there are differences of opinion as regards the Kalpa theory. Some Vedantists hold that the whole of the Universe never returns into the Absolute but only a part of it at a time i. e. they believe in Khanda Pralaya but not in Mahapralaya. Others hold that the whole of the Universe returns into the Absolute and that is in Mahapralaya. His Excellency then remarked "How can the Khanda Pralaya theory be true when there is this in Vedanta that the whole of the

Universe is a projection of the Absolute and when you believe that the chain of coming out and going in of the Universe is true for all time."

His Excellency was then led to the library room and the room upstairs which was occupied by Swami Vivekananda when alive, and thence to Thakur Ghar or worship room where His Excellency knowing that it is a custom with the Hindus to take off shoes before they enter the temple; took off his shoes and then entering inside saw the Altar where the relics of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are kept. He asked if they meant by relics, 'ashes,' and was replied in the affirmative. Then he was led into the side room where are stored the bed and other things which were actually used by Sri Ramakrishna in his life time. He was shown all the contents to which he seemed to take particular interest and asked several questions which were duly replied. On coming down to the place where he was first seated he was told by the Secretary that it was a custom with their Master never to allow any man to go away from him without partaking of some sweets etc. and that if His Excellency would oblige them by following this custom of theirs. On His Excellency very kindly agreeing he was offered a cup of tea, some fruits, biscuits and *sandesh*. His Excellency took lemon with his tea in lieu of milk and as he was taking his tea he asked a few questions such as how many Centres the Math and the Mission has in India and America. As he took *sandesh* some of the members were introduced to His Excellency including the Editor of the Prabuddha Bharata which is published from Mayavati in the Himalayas. His Excellency was then led to see the temple erected over the cremation ground of the Swami Vivekananda and saw the bas Relief of the great Swami and was told that it has been constructed at Jeypore. Thence he was led to the guest house, built as a memorial to the late great dramatist Mr. G. C. Ghosh and his most intimate friend Babu K. P. Ghosh—disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Dev. His Excellency was told that some of the European friends of the Mission stopped there such as Mrs. Sevier whose husband built the Math for the Mission at Mayavati, the late Mrs. P. Geddes, Miss McLeod—the aunt of Lady Sandwich etc. His Excellency was led thence to the charitable dispensary and on being told that both Allopathy and Homœopathy and

Kaviraji are being used and good numbers of cases are treated, seemed to be deeply interested. He was then led to see the cooking arrangements for the ensuing Utsab of the 9th instant and saw some sweets in course of preparation. Then His Excellency, with all courtesy, apologising for the troubles given, wanted to take leave. On being presented with a bunch of few roses grown in the Math and some bouquets by the Secretary he took his leave thanking the Order. The Secretary again expressed the sincere gratitude of the Order and that it had been a great privilege conferred on the Order by His Excellency's coming to see their place and bade adieu to him on the gangway leading to the jetty. As His Excellency boarded the ship the monks gave loud cheers "Joy Guru Maharaj ki Jai"—His Excellency waving his hands to the monks all the time they were in sight.

Before his departure he enquired why was the rampart wall (Postha) in front of the Math, in an unfinished condition. The Secretary replied that it was in that unfinished condition, owing to want of funds. His Excellency then went on board the steamer and left the place. On the 11th of March the Secretary received the following letter from His Excellency's Private Secretary:

D. O. 476.

Government House, Calcutta.
11th March 1919.

Dear Sir,

His Excellency has been pleased to sanction as a slight return for the kindness you showed him on the occasion of his recent visit a grant of Rs. 500 to the Ramkrishna Mission as a contribution towards the cost of rivetting the riverside land belonging to the Math at Belur. The amount will be placed at the disposal of the District Magistrate, Howrah.

Yours truly

Sd. H. R. Wilkinson.

The Secy. R. K. Mission, Belur Math.
Belur.

The noble example set by His Excellency is worthy of the exalted position he holds. His appreciation of the value of the Ramkrishna Mission, we must say, is a great asset. By his august presence His Excellency has removed effectively the slur which was sought to be at-

tached to this society whose mission is to do service to the suffering humanity.

APPEAL

The Governing body of the Belur Math appeals to the generous public for contributions to the fund for the building of the rampart wall along the whole length of the riverside land belonging to the Math. It is to be hoped that all sympathisers with the ideals and activities of the Math will come forward readily with their help. The Math was founded by the Swami Vivekananda for the regeneration of the spirituality of the Sanatana Dharma in the Indian consciousness and for the spreading and propagation of the Hindu philosophy and religion all over the world by means of trained teachers as a beneficent factor of world-civilisation. By its gospel of social service and philanthropic activities as evidenced many times during periods of national distress and calamity, and also by its propagation of the religion of Vedanta in India and America and Europe evangelising the lives of many seekers after Truth, the Math has established its place as a beneficent institution working for the uplift of humanity in India and outside. We trust that the generous public will come forward to contribute to the fund for completing the Postha, the nucleus of which has been founded by the good Governor of Bengal. Sympathisers and donors will kindly send their donation to—

The President, The Math,

Belur P. O., Howrah, Bengal.

THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

(Fifteenth Annual Report.—January to
December, 1918.)

THE Mayavati Charitable Dispensary completed its fifteenth year in December, 1918. It is gratifying to note that the demand on its service that year was decidedly more than in the previous year, as will be seen from the total number of patients treated coming up to 554, as against 270 in 1917, that is more than double. The details of the

work and its financial condition will appear from the following statistics:

(a) Statement of Diseases Treated from
January to December 1918.

Names of diseases	Outdoor	Indoor	Total
Specific Infections :—			
Syphilis ...	4		4
Cholera ...	5		5
Malarial Fever ...	27	2	29
Fever (unknown origin)	61		61
Nervous System :—			
Debility ...	3		3
Neuralgia ...	13		13
Respiratory System :—			
Coryza ...	10		10
Bronchitis ...	4		4
Influenza ...	35		35
Pneumonia ...	1		1
Asthma ...	1		1
Digestive System :—			
Mouth and tooth	17		17
Dyspepsia ...	13		13
Diarrhoea ...	15		15
Dysentery ...	23	1	24
Worms ...	20	1	21
Jaundice ...	3		3
Other liver complaints	14	1	15
Ductless Glands and			
Lymphatic System :—			
Goitre & Mumps	9		9
Kidney ...	3		3
Generative System :—			
Gonorrhoea ...	14	1	15
Leucorrhoea ...	9		9
Amenorrhoea ...	3		3
Menorrhagia ...	5		5
Locomotive System :—			
Rheumatism ...	17		17
Diseases of the Skin	32	1	33
" " Eye	96	2	98
" " Ear	20		20
Surgical cases ...	26		26
Other diseases ...	42		42
Total	545	9*	554

*Of these indoor patients 3 were completely cured and the rest were relieved and left treatment. Death nil.

(b) Statement of Religion and Sex of Patients.
Indoor and Outdoor.

Hindus	520	Men	273
Mahomedans	20	Women	130
Christians	14	Children	151
	554		554

(c) Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
for 1918.

	Receipts	Rs.	As.	P.
Last year's Balance	...	477	12	3
Subscriptions	...	27	0	0
Donations	...	280	8	0
Interest from Savings Bank...	...	27	4	0
Sale proceeds of pamphlets...	...	10	7	0
Total Rs.	...	822	15	3
	Disbursements	Rs.	As.	P.
Doctor's maintenance charges	...	236	0	0
Refunded to Post office for payment wrongly made	...	4	7	0
Medicines bought	...	39	5	0
Hot-water bag	...	5	0	0
Sundry expenses	...	0	3	9
Total Rs.	...	284	15	9
Balance in hand Rs.	...	537	15	6

Kumaon is decidedly a backward area and hospitals are few and far between. Consequently people often come from distances of 12 or 15 miles even to get medicines. The Mayavati Charitable Dispensary depends upon the generosity of kind-hearted public, for local aid in such a place is almost nil. We therefore earnestly appeal to all sympathetic hearts to send in their mites in aid of the sufferers in this unenlightened hill tract, for suffering is more acute where education is scarce. All contributions will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the Secretary, Mayavati Charitable Dispensary, P. O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora.

Madhavananda,
Secy., M. C. D.

FAMINE IN MANBHUM & BANKURA.

Ramkrishna Mission's Work & Appeal.

Through the kind contributions of the generous public of Bengal and other Provinces we are managing somehow with the increasing difficulty of the hungry people of Manbhum and Bankura. We have now been able to extend the area of relief from 11 villages to 69 villages and so increasing the number of the recipients of relief at

our works from 196 to 2383 in the district of Manbhum. In the district of Bankura free doles of rice are distributed in 26 villages to 222 recipients. Conjointly with it we have opened Test Works and thereby to alleviate the intensity of water scarcity, by re-excavating one tank and a well in Bagda centre in the Manbhum District and digging five wells (*kuntcha*) in Indpur centre in the Bankura District. Money has been advanced to the able-bodied widows to continue their husking-work, the regular means of their livelihood. To meet the growing demands of our relieving works the benevolent public must be more liberal to stretch their helping hands towards these starving people. The recent report which we have got from our workers regarding want of cloth is also very distressing and it will be ungraceful to put in the statement in black and white. In the new area of relief even women of the poorer classes are in an acute state for want of cloth. Some of them are covering themselves with timber leaves stitched together. So we earnestly appeal to our kind public not to throw away as useless even their tattered clothes but to send them to our addresses to save the situation of the distressed women.

In the meantime since our last appeal we have opened Fire Relief works at Bhubaneswar in the district of Puri and by the next week again, we are going to open a relief centre at Brahmanbaria in the district of Tippera.

The following gentlemen and ladies have strengthened our famine relief funds with their kind contributions, received at Belur Math, in the month of March, 1919:

A friend, Comilla, Rs. 5000, S. N. Bannerjee, Bankura, Rs. 10, V. Vishva Nath Aiyar, Trichinopoly Re. 1, Jogeshvar Chatterji, Bhagalpur Rs. 2, Sarat Ch. Bhattacharyya, Chaltabalia Rs. 5, Kedarpur Daridra Bhandar Rs. 5, Kedar Nath Ghose, Sukchar Rs. 30, Pankaj K. Aich, Bhawanipur Rs. 5, Haripada Paul, Calcutta Rs. 2, A. R. Mazumdar, Nattore Rs. 5, H. B. Banerji, Basra Rs. 55, Hari Mohan Ghose, Calcutta, Rs. 25, Maniranjan Sen, Calcutta Re. 1, Shrish Ch. Dey, Burdwan Rs. 7-10, Kailas Ch. Mandal, Harkashan Rs. 2, Barada K. Sen Gupta, Kazibazar, Re. 1, D. P. Banerji, Bansjora Rs. 5, S. N. Bose, Bansjora Rs. 5, S. Venkatachalam, Madras Rs. 25, Fani Bh. Paul, Uttarpara 4 as; Hari M. Chatterji, Bally 8 as, Brojendra K. Dutta,

Bhawanipur 8 as., Niamat Ali, Behala 4 as., Jatindra Nath Mukerji, Sinter 4 as., Tincouri Singh Rs. 2, Rama R. Banerji 12 as., Satehidananda Banerji, Sibpur Re. 1, S. Bhadrakali 4 as., H. Roy 4 as., S. Mukerji, Cal. One Ribbon; B. Cal. 8 as; Ashutosh Ghosal Rs. 2; R. Ghose, Cal. 4 as; Susil Ch. Nag, Dacca Rs. 15; Harendra K. Aich, Cal. Re. 1; Nalini Nath Roy Choudhury Rs. 3; Sm. Tarubala Devi, Madhupur Rs. 10; Gopal Ch. Sarma Ajmere Rs. 5; Dinobandhu Palta, Dacca Rs. 5; Sri Sri Shingha Bahini Mata, Cal. Rs. 15; Shyama Bahadur, Jalashvar Rs. 5; Birendra Nath Nath, Alipur Rs. 2; Jagat Bandhu Ray, Ballygunj Rs. 5; A friend, Bombay Rs. 50; Charu Ch. Das, Cal. Rs. 2; Sailendra Baul, Cal. Re. 1; N. B. Panday, Surat Rs. 2; S. N. Chackravarty, Cal. Rs. 5; Siva Ch. Mukherji, Cal. Rs. 10; S. P. Neogi, Garhwal Rs. 10; Jogesh Ch. Biswas, Kokdahara Rs. 2-5; Shidar Chatterji, Amta Re. 1; Lalit M. Ghose, Calcutta 6 as; C. C. Mitra, Cal. Rs. 20; Mrs. J. N. Bose, Ballygunj Rs. 40; Students of the Second Class, Oriental Academy, Shantipur Rs. 2; Suresh Ch. Bannerji, Gouhati Rs. 5; E. Vijayannagalingam, Rs. 3; V. N. Kuppuraio, Madras Rs. 2.

All contributions in shape of money or in cloth may be sent, to enable us to continue our work of relief to the following addresses:

- (1) The President, R. K. Mission, Belur, Howrah.
- (2) The Secretary, R. K. Mission, Udbodhan Office, Calcutta.

Swami Saradananda,

Secy., R. K. Mission.

NEWS AND NOTES.

THE 84th birthday of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, was celebrated in Mercara, Coorg, on the 13th April. It is as follows:—The first item of the programme there was procession through the town with the portrait of the Gurumaharaj placed in a tastefully decorated Mandapam to the accompaniment of band and a Bhajana party. The progress of the procession from the Central High School Hall at 9 a. m. round the Omkareshwar Temple through the Brahmin Valley was punctua-

ted by the devotional offerings of the Aratrikam with camphor, fruits and cocoanuts. The procession returned to its starting place at about 12 a. m. Then some 400 poor Narayanas were provided with food-stuffs and money. The public assembled in the Central High School Hall at about 2 p. m. They were entertained with a Harikatha and Mr. M. Shankaranarayana Rao read an address on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in Canarese. Rai Bahadur M. Muttanna, "Rajakaryaprasakta" being in the chair, made a short speech emphasizing the necessity of the Vedanta Society in Coorg. With Mangalarati and distribution of Prasadam the day's function was brought to a happy close.

UNDER the auspices of the Vedanta Society, Bangalore Cantonment, the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekanandaji was celebrated in the Chathur Veda Sidhantha Sabha School premises on Sunday last with much *acat*. At noon about 800 poor were fed sumptuously in the name of that great modern Saint of India. In the afternoon there was Bhajana followed by select hymns, sung by the little sisters of the Hindu Balika Pathshala to the accompaniment of harmonium, violin and Mridhangam. In the evening Mr. R. A. Krishnamachari, B. A., an admirer of Swamiji, delivered a stirring speech on the life and social work chalked out by Swamiji for the regeneration of the poor and distressed. After dusk the Swamiji's photo, well decorated with flowers and ferns on a Vimanam was taken round in procession through the principal streets of the Cantonment, preceded by Indian Brass Band. The Swamis Virajananda, Durgananda and Somananda of the local Sri Ramakrishna Mission graced the occasion with their holy presence. The function was closed at about 9 p. m. with Mangalarathi and distribution of oranges to the audience and also to all the young sisters of the Hindu Balika Pathshala. Finally the Secretary thanked on behalf of the Society the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission and the audience for their kind presence and to the subscribers—both mofussil and local, for their liberal contributions towards the feeding of the poor brethren.

THE 57th birthday of Sri Swami Vivekananda was celebrated under the auspices of Ramakrishna

Sevashrama, Rainawari, Srinagar, Kashmir State on 9th February, Sunday at the Kashmir Buildings Amirakadal. The programme of the day, as usual, included the feeding of the poor, distribution of breads; a speech in English by Pt. Sarvanand Tikod B. A., a paper in Urdu by Pt. Jialal Kaul Nazir; the presidential speech was given by Lala Gobind Sahai, President, Arya Samaj. He remarked that the message of Swamiji was that of courage and the message of service and pointed out that according to Swamiji "caste" as it existed to-day is not the real 'Jati' of ancient India. The meeting was brought to a close with the distribution of apples. Bhajanas were sung.

We have received the following report of the R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal for March 1919:

Indoor patients

There were 5 old cases and 13 new admitted, 11 discharged cured, 1 died, 1 left treatment and 5 are still under treatment.

Outdoor patients

There were 2210 cases of which 1007 new and 1203 repeated numbers.

Balance of the last month ...	Rs. 7508—4—9
Total Receipts of the month ...	Rs. 1080—4—3

Total Receipts Rs.	8588—9—0
Total disbursements Rs.	264—13—9

Balance in hand Rs. 8323—11—3

The receipts include a donation of Rs. 700 received from Babu Kunja Behari Lall, Engineer, Ahmedabad for the foundation of dispensary buildings in memory of his parents in the 1st instalment. The total amount promised by him is Rs. 1000. Donors can perpetuate the beloved memory of their deceased relatives by erecting one or more rooms of the dispensary. The cost of one room is Rs. 1250. The total cost of the building is more than Rs. 5000.

P. S. It is our sincere gratification that the Maha Maha Baruni Mela in which many lakhs of pilgrims assembled at Hardwar passed off without any case of cholera though arrangements were made in the Sevashrama to cope with the disease during the Mela.